

# THE POSITION OF IMAAM ABU HANIFAH (R) IN THE SCIENCE OF HADITH

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## Forward

Firstly, all praise belongs to Allah Ta'ala, without whom nothing is possible. Also, salutations are due to Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam), who is the greatest teacher that Allah Ta'ala ever bestowed upon mankind. Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was taught the Qur'an by Allah Ta'ala's most-trusted angel, Jibril (A.S.). Beyond this, Jibril (A.S.) was also sent to demonstrate to Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) the way of life that Allah Ta'ala prefers the most. By way of this process of teaching, Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) taught his companions, the Sahabah (R.A.), who taught their companions the Tabi'een, and so forth and so on.

We can see that Allah Ta'ala has always decreed the transmission of important knowledge through a rightly-guided teacher. As it stands in Islam, the chain that links all the way back to Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) has never been broken. One of the Tabi'een (people who have seen the Sahaabah [R]) was Imaam Abu Hanifah (R), who has millions of followers from amongst the Muslims today, and is held in high esteem amongst the great Scholars of Islam. Unfortunately, today severe criticism has been leveled against him which is mainly due to either ignorance, jealousy or misunderstanding.

Was Imam Abu Hanifa (R) weak in the science of *Hadith*? Did he rely on *Qiyas* (analogical deduction)? Has he based his school of thought on *Dha'eef Ahaadith*? Was he considered unreliable in the Islamic sciences? Did the 'Ulama consider him untrustworthy? This booklet will address these claims, as well as other remarks leveled at the prestigious Imaam (R).

Shaykh Arshad Madani (Daamat Barakaatuhum), Teacher of Hadith in the famous seminary of India, Darul Uloom Deoband; President of The Jamiatul Ulama Hind; our teacher and spiritual mentor, whom we have had the honor of hosting every year had inspired us to start this effort to defend these great *Salaf al Saaliheen* (Pious Predecessors). Shaykh Habeebur Rahman Al- A'zami, Teacher of Hadith in the famous seminary of India, Darul Uloom Deoband, and my own teacher, has addressed this topic in his booklet, "Ilme Hadis mai Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) Ka Maqaam o Martaba", published by the Jamiatul Ulama of India. This is a humble effort to translate that work. The reader should note that the objective of this work is not to criticize any faction or group but to establish the reliability of the great Imaam (R) and remove the ill-thoughts of many concerning him. In my view this work is a very scholarly essay that educates those who wish to research with an open mind.

I owe a debt of gratitude to many people who helped in making this translation a success. To begin with, I would like to thank my Father, Professor Moulana Muhibbur Rahman, who recommended and encouraged me to translate this book. I am also indebted to my colleague, Mufti Mahdi Alam, to some of my students of Darul Uloom New York, namely Haafiz Lutfi Alam, Imran Fariad, and Thomas Feliciano (Mustafa). I greatly benefitted from their valuable feedback, comments and suggestions. I would also like to thank my family for bearing with patience my coming home late at night and spending the weekend in front of the computer. May Allah Ta'ala reward them all and accept them. I had undertaken the task of translating this booklet in a very short

time; hence it may contain many typographical errors. Hopefully in the near future, we will republish this translation with more corrections and additions. We, at Madani Academy, hope to continue a series of translations like this in the future. Please feel free to offer your valuable suggestions, as it would be much appreciated. For any questions or comments, please contact me at the email given below. Jazakumullah Khair.

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## IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MERCIFUL, THE BENEFICIENT.

The fact that he holds the mighty title of being a *Taa'ibee*<sup>1</sup> is sufficient to establish the greatness and magnificence of Al-Imaam Al-A'zam Abu Hanifah, Nu'maan bin Thaabit (R)<sup>2</sup>, in regards to Religion and Spirituality. This virtue of Abu Hanifah has distinguished him from his fellow Scholars of *Hadith* and *Fiqh* in granting him a higher chain of narration.<sup>3</sup> Regarding this, 'Allamah<sup>4</sup> Ibn Hajar Haithami (R) writes,

“Verily, he (Imaam Abu Hanifah [R]) had found the era of a group of *Sabaabah* (R.A.)<sup>5</sup> who lived in Koofa (in Iraq) after his birth in 80 A.H.<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, he is counted amongst the *Taabi'een*<sup>7</sup>, and this honor has not been granted to any of the other *Imaams* of his era and time amongst his contemporaries such as Imaam Auzaa'i in Shaam (Syria), the two Hamaad's of Basrah (in Iraq)<sup>8</sup>, Imaam Sufyaan Thawri of Koofa, Imaam Maalik of Madina, and Laith bin Sa'ad of Egypt.”<sup>9</sup>

Haafidh<sup>10</sup> Ibn Hajar 'Asqalaani (R)<sup>11</sup> replies to an inquiry in regards to whether Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) was a *Taabi'ee* or not, substantiating it with proofs, saying,

“Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) had found a group of *Sabaabah* (R.A.) because he was born in Koofah in 80 A.H. At that time, *Sabaabah* the likes of 'Abdullah bin Aufaa (R.A.), about whose death is unanimously agreed (amongst scholars) as afterwards, and Anas bin Maalik (R) in Koofa,

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<sup>1</sup> A person in the time after the *Sabaabah* who had seen the *Sabaabah* in a state of *Imaan* and died in that state.

<sup>2</sup> A leader, guide, or one that is followed. *Al-A'zam* meaning greatest, as he was the most senior of the four imams of fiqh and also highest in rank in the sense that he was the only *Tabi'ee* (one who saw Sahaabah [R]) amongst them. Nu'maan was his name and Thaabit his fathers.

<sup>3</sup> Chain of narration meaning the chain of the narrators of *hadith*, the higher the chain, the closer one is linked to Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) spiritually.

<sup>4</sup> A title given to a scholar of high caliber in knowledge, piety, authenticity and trustworthiness, this title will repeat many times in this booklet, please take note of it.

<sup>5</sup> *Sabaabah* is plural of the *Sahabi*, meaning companions of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam)

<sup>6</sup> A.H. stands for After *Hijrah*, denoting the Islamic calendar.

<sup>7</sup> *Taabi'een* is the plural of the word *Taabi'ee*, meaning those who saw the *Sabaabah*.

<sup>8</sup> Referring to Hamaad bin Zaid and Hamaad bin Salamah.

<sup>9</sup> Al Khairaat Al Hisaan 6<sup>th</sup> chapter, pg. 21, Ibn Hajar Haithami- The Scholars mentioned in this passage are some of the greatest scholars the history of Islam has ever produced. They are ALL regarded as Imaams and sources for the sciences of every field in Religion. They has immense knowledge, piety, were Authentic and well renown. Anyone studying the science of *Hadith* cannot afford to be ignorant of them.

<sup>10</sup> Please take note of the definition of this term as it will repeat itself many times in this small booklet. It is extensively discussed in the science of *Hadith*, and Imaam Abu Hanifa is also worthy of that title as will be clarified in the forthcoming pages. Therefore we deemed it fit to give a brief explanation as to the meaning of this word in terms of the Science of *Hadith*. A *Haafidh* in the terminology of the *Muhadditheen* is someone who has mastered all the sciences related to *Hadith*, including knowledge of *Asaaneed*(chains of narration), *Mutoon*(Texts of the *Hadith*), *Asmaa'ur Rijjal*(Biographies of the narrators), *Al Jarb Wal Ta'deel*(narrator criticism and approval), 'Ilal(the hidden defects in a Hadith), and he has studied the major Hadith books, including the *Sibab Sittab*(Six Authentic books of *Hadith*) and *Musnad Ahmad*, as well as at least a thousand (1000) *Ajzaa'*(small books of Hadith) and he has many thousands of *Hadith*. See Tadrib Al Raawi pg.14 for details.

<sup>11</sup> Haafidh Ibn Hajar 'Asqalaani- (d.852h) One of the greatest scholars of *Hadith* known to all, who had mastered every field of *Hadith*. He authored the most renown commentary of Sahih Al Bukhaari, Fath Al Baari, in 20 volumes. His book, Sharh Al Nukhbah, is the most widely accepted work on *Usoolul Hadith*.

who died in 90 A.H. or after that. Ibn Sa'd, with a reliable chain narrates that Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) had seen Anas (RA), and other than these two, there were other *Sabaabah* (RA) still alive in other countries.

Some (scholars) had composed a treatise concerning those narrations in which Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) narrated from *Sabaabah* (R.A.), but none of these narrations are free of criticism<sup>12</sup>. The reliable opinion is what we have narrated earlier from Ibn Sa'd in his Al-Tabaqaat. Thus, Imaam Abu Hanifah (R), in this regard, is counted amongst the *Taabi'een*.<sup>13</sup>

Besides 'Allamah Ibn Hajar Haithami Makki and Haafidh Ibn Hajar 'Asqalaani, those whom have accepted and acknowledged the status of Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) as a *Taabi'ee* include: Imaam Darul Qutni, Haafidh Abu Nu'aim Asbahaani, Haafidh Ibn 'Abdil Birr, Imaam Khateeb Baqhdadi, Imaam Ibnul Jawzi, Imaam Sam'aani, Haafidh 'Abdul Ghani Maqdisi, the grandson of Ibnul Jawzi, Haafidh Zainuddeen 'Iraaqi, Waliyyuddeen 'Iraaqi, Ibnul Wazeer Yamaani, as well as other *Imaams* of *Hadith*.

“This is a virtue of Allah; he bestows it upon whom he wills.” Sura Jumu'ah, Ayah 3

## **Journey for the Knowledge of *Hadith***

Besides the knowledge of *Fiqh* [Jurisprudence] and *Kalaam* [Theology], Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) had also specifically studied *Hadith* and its sciences with an expertise (in it). In accordance to the habit of the *Muhadditheen*<sup>14</sup>, he had also embarked on journeys in search of knowledge of *Hadith*.

Imaam Dhahabi (R)<sup>15</sup>, who is a master, expert, and source in the science *Rijaal*<sup>16</sup>, concerning Imaam Abu Hanifah in his famous work Siyar Al-Plaam Al-Nubalaa<sup>17</sup> states, “Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) embarked on journeys specifically and solely for the knowledge of *Hadith*.” He also writes, “Verily Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) studied and strived rigorously for *Hadith* and excelled in it, particularly from 100 A.H. and after.”<sup>18</sup>

The statement of Imaam Dhahabi (R), “Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) embarked on journeys...,” is explained in detail by Imaam Muwaffaq bin Ahmad Makki in his famous work, Manaaqib Al-Imaam Al-A'zam [The virtues of Imaam A'zam] stating, “Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) Al-Koofi [resident of Koofa] travelled to Basrah for the knowledge of *Hadith* on more than twenty occasions and often remained there for most of the year.”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Here the subject of criticism should be noted well, in order to understand well, one must refer back to the Arabic. The subject of criticism is not the reliability of Imaam Abu Hanifah himself but rather the people that came to narrate afterwards.

<sup>13</sup> Tabyeeedul Saheefah by Haafidh Suyooti pg.25,26 Karachi print, 1418H.

<sup>14</sup> *Muhadditheen*- This word refers to a scholar who is a master in the field of *Hadith*. This word will be repetitive.

<sup>15</sup> Imaam Haafidh Dhahabi- (d.748h) An Imaam in all the fields of *Hadith*, especially in the fields of *Al Asmaa wa Rijaal* and *Jarb and Ta'deel*. He was an outstanding student of Shaykhul Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah. His works, Siyar Plaam Al Nubalaa and Meezaan Al P'tidaal, were the most accepted and authoritative books in the fields of *Asmaa wa Rijaal* and *Jarb wa Ta'deel*.

<sup>16</sup> *Rijaal*- referring to the science of *Asmaa wa Rijaal* which is, the science of the biographies of *Hadith* narrators. One must master this field in order to master the Science of *Hadith*.

<sup>17</sup> Siyar Al Plaam Al Nubalaa - 6/396

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Manaaqib Al Imaam Al A'zam 1/59

During that era, the very journey for *Hajj* itself was a great means of benefit [knowledge] because the great Scholars of the different countries would gather in the Haramain Shareefain<sup>20</sup>, and would continue their lessons there. Imaam Abul Mahaasin Margheenaani has mentioned that Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) performed Hajj 55 times. This is not something so astonishing in Islamic History that one should consider it an over-exaggeration, as many others can be named who have performed *Hajj* many more times than that. Shaikh ‘Ali bin Munzir, the teacher of Imaam Ibn Maajah<sup>21</sup>, performed Hajj 58 times, and the majority of them were on foot.<sup>22</sup> Muhaddith Sa’eed bin Sulaiman Abu ‘Uthman Waasiti performed Hajj 60 times.<sup>23</sup> Haafiz Abdul Qaadir Qurashi narrates in *Al-Jawaahir Al Mudiyyah Fi Tabaqaatil Hanafiyyah* that Imaam Sufyaan bin ‘Uyaynah<sup>24</sup>, performed Hajj 80 times.

Besides this, from 130 A.H. until the era of Khalifah Mansoor ‘Abbasi, which was a period of 6 years, Imaam Abu Hanifah(R) stayed in Makkah Mukarramah.<sup>25</sup>

In accordance with the common customs of that time, Imaam Abu Hanifah(R) benefitted tremendously from the *Imaams* of the Haramain Shareefain and from the remaining great *Hadith* Scholars during the journey of *Hajj* and the period of residency of 6 years. He was so engrossed in his endeavor of knowledge that his teachers add up to 4,000.<sup>26</sup>

### **Expertise and Mastery in the Science of *Hadith***

Then, to ascertain how much knowledge of *Hadith* he gained, let us observe a quote from a famous *Imaam* of *Hadith*, Imaam Mis’ar bin Kidaam, as reported by Imaam Dhahabi in his book, *Manaaqib Imaam Abu Hanifah (R)*,

Imaam Mis’ar bin Kidaam, who is considered a *Haafidhul Hadith*<sup>27</sup>, discussing the greatness of Imaam Abu Hanifah (R), writes,

“We studied *Hadith* alongside Abu Hanifah and he surpassed us. We struggled to become ascetic and he overwhelmed us, and we studied *Fiqh* together, and now you see the gems of his perfection.”<sup>28</sup>

This is that very same Mis’ar, whom by merit of his memory, Imaam Shu’bah titled, “Al-Mushaf.”<sup>29</sup> Haafiz Abu Muhammad Raamahurmuzi writes in the first and most comprehensive work in Usool Al Hadith, *Al Muhaddith Al Faasil*, that when Imaam Shu’bah and Imaam Sufyaan Thawri would differ in regards to a *Hadith*, they would say, “Take us to the scale (The scale between right and wrong in regards to the knowledge of *Hadith*), Mis’ar.” Ponder over the fact that Imaam Shu’bah and Imaam Sufyaan Thawri are both considered “Ameerul Mu’mineen fil Hadith” [The

<sup>20</sup> The two sacred places, namely, *Makkah* and *Madinah*.

<sup>21</sup> Imaam Ibn Maajah- Author of the famous *Sunan Ibn Al Maajah*, one of the six authentic books.

<sup>22</sup> *Sunan Ibn Maajah* Chapter of Hunting Dogs.

<sup>23</sup> *Manaaqib Imaam Ahmad* by Ibn Al Jawzi p.387

<sup>24</sup> Imaam Sufyaan Ibn ‘Uyaynah- famous Hafidhul Hadith (d.198h) and Imaam in the science of *Jarb* and *Ta’deel*.

<sup>25</sup> *Uqoodul Jumaan* by the famous Historian and Muhaddith Imaam Muhammad bin Yousuf Al Saalihi Al Shaafi’ee p.312

<sup>26</sup> In *Uqoodul Jumaan*, Imaam Saalihi has mentioned under the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter, the names of his teachers, p.24

<sup>27</sup> *Haafidhul Hadith*- this term has been defined in detail in footnote number 11 please refer to that

<sup>28</sup> *Manaaqib* of Imaam Dhahabi, p.27

<sup>29</sup> *Tadhkiratul Huffaadh* of Imaam Dhahabi 1/188.

leaders of all the Muslims in the science of *Hadith*]. When these two regard Mis'ar to be the scale of correctness of this science, then what would be the level of Abu Hanifah?

The famous historian and *Imaam* of *Hadith* Imaam Abu Sa'd Sam'aani, writes in his book Kitaabul Ansaab in regards to Imaam Abu Hanifah (R):

“He engrossed himself in seeking the knowledge of *Hadith* and excelled to such an extent that none other had achieved what he had.”<sup>30</sup>

This may have been the reason why whenever Shaikhul Islaam Al Haafidh Abu ‘Abdur Rahman Muqri (Teacher of both Imaam Bukhaari and Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbal) narrates from him, he uses the title “Shaahinshaah” [King of Kings] of *Hadith*, accepting and acknowledging the perfection and mastery of the knowledge of Imaam Abu Hanifah,. Shaikhul Islaam Al Haafidh Abu ‘Abdur Rahman Muqri is a illustrious student of Imaam Abu Hanifah, who had narrated 900 Ahaadith from him [Imaam Abu Hanifah (R)], as mentioned by ‘Allamah Kurdi in his book, Manaaqib Al-Imaam Al-A'zam. He [Allama Kurdi] writes,

“Abdullah bin Yazeed Al-Muqri (Abu Abdur Rahman) heard 900 Ahaadith from the *Imaam* [Imaam Abu Hanifah]”<sup>31</sup>

The Great *Muhaddith*, Yazeed bin Haroon, acknowledging this fact writes, “Imaam Abu Hanifah was pure (in character), pious, an ascetic, a scholar, truthful, and the greatest *Haafidh*<sup>32</sup> of his era.”<sup>33</sup>

The Imaam of Jarh' and Ta'deel [*Hadith* narrator criticism]<sup>34</sup> Yahya bin Sa'eed Al-Qattaan<sup>35</sup> in regards to the *Imaam's* in-depth and profound knowledge of *Qur'aan*, *Hadith*, and general knowledge, states,

“Verily, he, by oath (in Allah), is the most knowledgeable of this *Ummah* (Muslim nation) in regards to that which has come from Allah and his *Rasool*.”<sup>36</sup>

Imaam Makki bin Ibrahim<sup>37</sup>, another teacher of Imaam Al-Bukhaari, says:

“Imaam Abu Hanifah was an ascetic, a Scholar, Inclined towards *Aakbirah*, truthful, and the greatest *Haafidh* of his era.”<sup>38</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Kitaabul Ansaab pg. 196

<sup>31</sup> Manaaqibul Imaam Al- A'zam by Muwaffaq Makki 2/216

<sup>32</sup> *Haafidh*- Refer to footnote number 11

<sup>33</sup> Akhbaar Abi Hanifah by Himyari pg 36

<sup>34</sup> *Jarh* and *Ta'deel*- refer to the chapter of Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) in the field of Jarh and Tadeel in this booklet.

<sup>35</sup> Yah'ya bin Sa'eed Al Qattaan- (d.198h) One of the main authorities in *Jarh* and *Ta'deel*. A Teacher of Imaam Ahmad (R).

<sup>36</sup> Muqaddamah Kitaabul Ta'leem by Mas'ood bin Shaibah Sindi (taken from Ibn Maajah aur ilm-e-hadith by Moulana Abdul Hameed Nu'maani, p.167)

<sup>37</sup> Makki bin Ibrahim- Outstanding student of Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) and Illustrious teacher of Imaam Bukhaari (R), who narrated the strongest narrations of Sahih Al Bukhaari, called the *Thulaatiyaat*, narrations which consist of only three narrators between Imaam Bukhari (R) and Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam). One should ponder over the fact that if Imaam Abu Hanifah would be weak in *Hadith*, then Imaam Bukhari should ultimately also be weak in *Hadith*.

<sup>38</sup> Manaaqib Imaam Al A'zam by Muwaffaq Makki 1/95



The wealth of knowledge of Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) can be deduced from the fact that when he authored his first book, Kitaabul Aathaar, he selected *Abaadeeth* from a collection of 40,000 *Abaadith*. Sadrul A’immah Muwaafaq bin Ahmad Makki narrates on the authority of the great Muhaddith and Imaam Bakr bin Muhammad Ziranjari (D.512h) that,

“And Abu Hanifah (R) selected *Abaadith* from 40,000 *Abaadith*.”<sup>39</sup>

Reflect now upon the statement of Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) himself as narrated by Imaam Haafidh Abu Yahya Zakariyya Yahya Naisapoori (D.297h) with a chain of narration in his book, Manaaqib Abi Hanifah,

“I have many containers of *Abaadith* from which I have taken out only those which can be easily benefitted from.”<sup>40</sup>

Now only Allah Ta’ala knows how many containers he had with him and how many *Abaadith* he had stored within them. But, this much is clear; Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) had a tremendous knowledge of *Abaadith*. The famous criticisms that Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) was weak in the science of *Hadith* and only knew 17 *Abaadith* is completely inaccurate and unsubstantiated. In the Scholarly world, this criticism is unheard of and holds no status above telltale fables.

### A Necessary Note

At this juncture, an important note should be taken that no mention was made of the *Mutoon* [text] of 40,000 *Abaadith*, but rather the chain of narrators of 40,000 *Abaadith*! Also included in this is are the sayings of *Sabaabah* and *Taab’een* because the *Salaf* [pious predecessors] would include all these in the words “*Hadith*” and “*Athar*.”<sup>41</sup>

In the time of Imaam Abu Hanifah (R), the *Asaaneed* [chains of narrations] and *Turuq* [different sources of chains] were not many more than 40,000. Later, in the time of Imaam Bukhaari and Imaam Muslim, the chains increased to the hundreds of thousands. The reason being is when a teacher narrates a *Hadith* to 10 students; this then becomes 10 different *Abaadith* according to the Scholars of *Hadith*. Now, if one extracts the chains of narrations for just the *Abaadith* of the books, Kitaabul Aathaar (by Imaam Abu Hanifah [R]) and Muwatta’ (by Imaam Malik [R]), then today a person will find many chains for each *Hadith*.

Haafidh Abu Nu’aim Asfahaani narrates with an unbroken chain from Yah’ya bin Nasr in Musnad Abi Hanifah (R):

“I entered upon Abu Hanifah in a room filled with books, so I asked, ‘What is this?’ to which he replied, ‘These are all *Abaadith*, and I have not narrated but that which is easy to benefit from.’”<sup>42</sup>

The famous *Muhaddith* Abu Muqaatil Hafis bin Muslim, acknowledging the leadership of Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) in the field of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*, states,

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> *Hadith* and *Athar*- *Hadith* refers to the sayings, actions and approval of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) while *Athar* may be a synonym of *Hadith* or it can hold the meaning of: the sayings, and actions of the *Sabaabah* (R).

<sup>42</sup> Al Intiqaa’ by Ibn Abdil Barr, p.319

“Imaam Abu Hanifah was the *Imaam* of the world in regards to *Fiqh*, knowledge, and piety in his time.” He also said, “Imaam Abu Hanifah was [put through such] a test, by which the innovators were distinguished from the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaa’ah*, and verily he had been lashed so that he may enter the world for them (for worldly benefit), but he refused.”<sup>43</sup>

The portion of the saying of Hafs bin Muslim, “Imaam Abu Hanifah was [put through such] a test, by which the innovators were distinguished from the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaa’ah*”, is explained by Imaam Abdul Azeez ibn Abi Rawwaad who says,

“Abu Hanifah a test (a criterion): thus he who loves Abu Hanifah is a *Sunni*, and he who has hatred towards him is an Innovator.”<sup>44</sup>

The great historian Shaikh Muhammad Bin Yusuf Saalihi has narrated the type of *Muhaddith* Imaam Abu Hanifah was, in his authentic, accepted, and comprehensive book ‘Uqoodul Jumaan Fi Mana’iqib Al Imaam Al A’zam Abi Hanifah An Nu’maan, saying,

“Know, that Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) was from the greatest *Huffaadh* of *Hadith*. It has passed [earlier in this article] that he studied from 4,000 teachers from amongst the *Taabi’een*, as well as others. Haafidh Dhahabi has mentioned him from amongst the level of the *Huffaadh* amongst the *Hadith* Scholars in his widely accepted book *Ta’reekhul Huffaadh*.<sup>45</sup> Verily he [Imaam Dhahabi] was correct and spoke well. If he (Imaam Abu Hanifah [R]) was not well grounded in the field of *hadith*, then he would not have had the ability to extract juristic rulings from them, whereas he was the first to derive and extract juristic rulings [from the sources of *Shariah*].”<sup>46</sup>

The high stature of Imaam Abu Hanifah(R) used to be mentioned amongst the great Scholars and *Huffaadh* of *Hadith*. Hence, the *Imaam* of the *Muhadditheen*, Abu Abdillah Al Haakim, in his famous and beneficial book, Ma’rifatu ‘Uloomil Hadeeth, mentions concerning the 49 types (of knowledge),

“This chapter of knowledge of *Hadith* is in mention of the famous and authentic scholars of the *Taabi’een* and *Tab’ al-Taabi’een*<sup>47</sup> from the East and West, whose narrated *Abaadith* have been gathered for memorization, discussion, and to seek blessings.”

Then, under this chapter, he mentions the famous *Imaams* of *Hadith* from the different Islaamic educational centers of Madinah, Makkah, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Yamaamah, Koofah, Jazeerah, Basrah, Wasit (Iraq), and Khuraasaan.

1. From amongst the *Muhadditheen* of Madinah are Imaam Muhammad bin Muslim Zuhri, Muhammad bin Al Munkadir Al Qurashi, Rabee’ah ibn Abi Abdir Rahmaan Al Raa’ice, Imaam Maalik bin Anas, Abdullah bin Deenaar, ‘Ubaidullah bin ‘Umar bin Hafs ‘Umri, ‘Umar bin Abdul ‘Aziz, Salamah bin Dinaar, Ja’far bin Muhammad Al Saadiq and others were also mentioned.

<sup>43</sup> Akhbaar Abi Hanifah by Saymari p.79

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> This is the strongest proof Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) being from amongst the Huffaadh.

<sup>46</sup> Uqoodul Jumaan p.319

<sup>47</sup> *Taabi’een* - Those who have seen the Sahaabah (R.A.). *Tab’ Al Taabi’een* - Those who have seen the *Taabi’een*.

2. From amongst the *Muhadditheen* of Makkah are Ibraheem bin Maysarah, Ismaa'eel bin Umayyah, Mujaahid bin Jabr, 'Amr bin Deenaar, 'Abdul Malik bin Jurayj, Fudhail bin 'Iyaadh and others were also mentioned.
3. From amongst the *Muhadditheen* of Egypt are 'Amr bin Al Haarith, Yazeed bin Abi Habeeb, 'Ayaash bin 'Abbaas Al Qatbaani, 'Abdurrahman bin Khaalid bin Musaa'fir, Haywah bin Shurayh' Al Tujaibi, Ruzaiq bin Hakeem al Ayli, and others have been mentioned.
4. From amongst the *Muhadditheen* of Syria, Abdurrahman bin 'Amr Al Auzaa'ee, Shu'aib bin Abi Hamzah Al Himsee, Rajaa' bin Haywah Al Kindi, Imaam Makhool (the *Faqeeh*), and others have been mentioned.
5. From amongst the *Muhadditheen* of Yemen, Hammaam bin Munabbih, Taoos bin Kaysaan, Dhahhaak bin Fayrooz Dailami, Shurahbil bin Kulaib San'ani and others have been mentioned.
6. From amongst the *Muhadditheen* of Yamaamah a, Yah'ya bin Abi Katheer, Abu Katheer Yazeed bin Abdurrahman Al Suhaimi, Abdullah bin Badr Yamaani and others have been mentioned.
7. From amongst the *Muhadditheen* of Koofa, 'Aamir bin Shurahbeel Al Sha'bi, Ibraheem Nakh'ee, Abu Ishaq Al Sabi'ee, 'Aun bin Abdillah, Moosa bin Abi 'Aishah Al Hamdaani, Sa'eed bin Masrooq Al Thawri, Al Hakam bin 'Utaibah Al Kindi, Hammaad bin Abi Sulaimaan (Teacher of Imaam Abu Hanifah[r]), Mansoor bin Al Mu'tamir Al Sulami, Zakariyyah bin Abi Zaidah Al Hamdaani, Mis'ar bin Kidaam Al Hilaali, **Imaam Abu Hanifah Nu'man bin Thaabit Al Taymi**, Sufyaan bin Sa'eed Al Thawri, Al Hasan bin Saalih bin Hayy, Hamzah bin Habeeb Al Zayyaat, Zufar bin Al Huzail (Student of Imaam Abu Hanifah [R]) and others have been mentioned.
8. From amongst the *Muhadditheen* of Jazeerah are Maymoon bin Mihraan, Katheer bin Murrah Hadhrami, Thawr bin Yazeed Abu Khaalid Al Rah'bi, Zuhair bin Mu'aawiyah and Khaalid bin Ma'daan Al 'Aabid have been mentioned.
9. From amongst the *Muhadditheen* of Basrah, Ayyoub bin Abi Taymiyyah Al Sakhtiyaani, Mu'aawiyah bin Qurrah Muzani, Abdullah bin 'Aun, Dawood bin Abi Hind, Shu'bah bin Hajjaaj (*Imaam of Jarb and Ta'deel*<sup>48</sup>), Hishaam bin Hassaan, Qataadah bin Di'aamah Sadoosi, Raashid bin Najih' Himmami, and others have been mentioned.
10. From amongst the *Muhadditheen* of Waasit, Yahya bin Deenaar Rumaani, Abu Khaalid Yazid bin 'Abdirrahman Daalaani, 'Awwaam bin Hawshab, and others have been mentioned.
11. From amongst the Muhadditheen of Khuraasaan are Abdurrahman bin Muslim, 'Utaybah bin Muslim, Ibraheem bin Adham Al Zaahid, Muhammad bin Ziyaad, and others have been mentioned.<sup>49</sup> [Rahimahumullah ajma'een]

Under this chapter, Imaam Haakim has mentioned more than 500 great *Muhadditheen* whose narrations hold great value amongst the *Muhadditheen*, and special care is taken to gather them. Imaam Abu Hanifah(R) is also mentioned from amongst these Scholars. Can we, after all this still deny Imaam Abu Hanifah(R) being a *Haafidhul Hadith*, rather from amongst the senior *Huffaadhul Hadith*?

Similarly, Imaam Dhahabi, who according to Ibn Hajar 'Asqalaani holds complete mastery in the field of narrator criticism, mentions the statement of Imaam Shaafi'ee in regards to Imaam Maalik, in his renowned work *Siyar Plaam Al Nubalaa*, that,

<sup>48</sup> This will be soon be elaborated on, in another footnote.

<sup>49</sup> *Ma'rifatu Uloomil Hadith* by Haakim p.240-249

“Knowledge revolves around three: Imaam Maalik, Imaam Laith, and Imaam Ibn ‘Uyaynah. I [Imaam Dhahabi] say, rather, [knowledge revolves] around seven more along with them, and they are Auzaa’i, Thawri, Ma’mar, Abu Hanifah, Shu’bah, and the two ‘Hammad’s.”<sup>50</sup>

You can see how Imaam Dhahabi includes Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) amongst those who are considered the authorities of *Hadith* from amongst the Senior ‘*Ulama of Hadith*. People of true knowledge can accredit the fact that Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) being considered in the same category as the great *Mubadditheen* is a proof of his Authenticity and reliability.

Therefore, in this very book, Siyar I’laam Al Nubalaa, Mahmoud bin Ghailaan mentions the famous *Imaam* and *Mubaddith* Yahya bin Aadam saying, “I heard Abu Usaama say, ‘Umar (R.A.) was the leader of all people (in terms of knowledge and *Ijtibaad*) and he was comprehensive (an embodiment of good qualities), and after that was Ibn ‘Abbaas (R.A.) in his era, and after him was Imaam Sha’bi in his era, and after him was Sufyaan Thawri, and after Imaam Thawri was Yah’ya bin Aadam.”

After quoting this, he (Imaam Dhahabi) states his opinion in regards to him (Yah’ya), saying, “I say that Yah’ya bin Aadam was from amongst the Senior *Mujtabideen*<sup>51</sup>, and ‘Umar (R.A.) was undoubtedly the Imaam of all people in his time in regards to Knowledge and *Ijtibaad*, then after him are ‘Ali (R.A.), Abdullah bin Mas’ood (R.A.), Mu’aaz bin Jabal (R.A.), and Abu Dardaa’ (R.A.). After them are Zaid bin Thaabit (R.A.), ‘Aishah (R.A.), Abu Moosa Ash’ari (R.A.), and Abu Huraira (R.A.). Then after them are ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbaas (R.A.), and ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar (R.A.). After these Sahaabah were ‘Alqamah, Masrooq, Abu Idrees Khowlaani and Sa’eed bin Musayyab. Then after them are Urwah bin Zubair, Imaam Sha’bi, Hasan Basri, Ibraheem Nakh’ee, Mujaahid, Taaos and others. Then after them are Ibn Shihaab Zuhri, ‘Umar bin ‘Abdil ‘Aziz, Qataadah, and Ayyoob Sakhtiyaani. Then after them are Imaam A’mash, Ibn ‘Aun, Ibn Jurayj, and ‘Ubaidullah bin ‘Umar. Then after them are Imaam Auzaa’i, Sufyaan Thawri, Ma’mar, **Imaam Abu Hanifah** and Shu’bah bin Hajjaj. Then after them are Imaam Maalik, Laith bin Sa’d, Hammaad bin Zaid and Sufyaan bin ‘Uyaynah. Then after them are ‘Abdullah bin Mubaarak, Yah’ya bin Sa’eed Al Qattaan, Wakee’ bin Jarraah’, ‘AbdurRahman bin Mahdi, and Abdullah bin Wahb. Then after them were Yah’ya bin Aadam, ‘Affan bin Muslim, Imaam Shaafi’ee and others. Then after them are Imaam Ah’mad bin Hanbal, Ishaq bin Raahwayh, Abu ‘Ubaid, ‘Ali bin Al Madeenee and Yah’ya bin Ma’een. Then after them are Abu Muhammad Daarimi, Imaam Bukhaari and other Scholars of Knowledge and *Ijtibaad* in their respective eras.<sup>52</sup>

At this juncture, Imaam Dhahabi has also included Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) amongst the senior ‘*Ulama of Hadith* which clearly denotes that according to Imaam Dhahabi, Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) was a master equal in rank to the senior *Mubadditheen*.

These senior *Mubadditheen*, meaning Imaam Mis’ar bin Kidaam, Imaam Abu Sa’d Sam’aani, *Haafidhul Hadith* Yazeed bin Haaron, Imaam Makki bin Ibrahim (teacher of Imaam Bukhaari), Abu Muqaatil, Imaam ‘Abdul ‘Azeez bin Ruwaad, the great historian and Muhaddith Muhammad bin Yousuf Saalahi, Imaam of the Muhadditheen Abu ‘Abdullah Haakim Naisaapuri, Imaam Dhahabi, and others, all verbally testify that Imaam Abu Hanifah held a unique status as a *Haafidhul Hadith* in

<sup>50</sup> Referring to Imaam Hammaad and Hammaad bin Zaid, both *Hadith* scholars of the Past.

<sup>51</sup> Those scholars who by means of the sources of *Shari’ah*, namely, *Qur’an*, *Hadith*, *Ijmaa’* (Scholarly consensus) and *Qiyas* (Analogical deduction), derive juristic rulings in all aspects of Islamic Law.

<sup>52</sup> Siyar A’laam Al Nubalaa 7/525-526

his era. Besides these great *Hadith* scholars of the past and present, Imaam Ibn Taymiyyah<sup>53</sup> and his famous student Ibnul Qayyim and others not only consider him a *Katbeerul Hadith*<sup>54</sup> but also one of the greatest *Huffaadh* of *Hadith*.

At this juncture, for brevity, we will deem it sufficient by quoting these great scholars of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*. There are many who praise Imaam A'zam (Abu Hanifah [R]). Imaam Haafidh 'Abdul Barr Andalusi Maaliki after quoting 67 senior *Mubadditheen* and *Fuqahaa* in his book, Al Intiqaa' fi Fadhaa'il Al A'immah Thalaatha Al Fuqahaa, writes, "And all these '*Ulama* have praised him in different words."<sup>55</sup>

Take a look at this quote in light of the *Hadith* related by Anas (R.A.) who narrates, "*Sabaabah* passed by a *Janaazah* and they praised him [the corpse], to which Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) replied, 'Verily, it has become obligatory,' so 'Umar (R.A.) inquired, 'What has become obligatory?' Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) replied, 'Because of this praise that you had showered him with, *Jannah* has become obligatory for him. You are the witnesses for Allah on the Earth."<sup>56</sup>

In accordance with this *Hadith*, the great scholars of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*, ascetics and saints, trustworthy and reliable people are all the witnesses of Allah on this Earth concerning the grandeur, stature, trustworthiness, and reliability of Imaam Abu Hanifah (R), and after the Witness of Allah Ta'aala, there is no need for any other witness.

### **The Trustworthiness and Reliability of Imaam Abu Hanifah (R)**

The high pedestal of knowledge, virtue, leadership, and fame that Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) holds, makes him independent of the individual *Ta'deel*<sup>57</sup> of the *Imaams* of *Jarb'* and *Ta'deel*.

Hence, Imaam Tajuddeen Subki, towards the end of his famous book, Jam'ul Jawaami' on the principles of *Fiqh*, writes, "We believe that Abu Hanifah, Maalik, Shaafi'ee, Ahmad, the two Sufyaans<sup>58</sup>, Auzaa'i, Ishaq bin Rahwayh, Dawood Dhaahiri, Ibn Jareer and all the *Imaams* of the *Muslims* are upon guidance from Allah in [matters of] *Aqaa'id* [beliefs] and other things. Those who speak ill of them (blame them) of that which they are free of are completely unworthy of receiving any attention. Verily, they were on such a level of divine knowledge, piety, worship, ascetism, and greatness, which the thought of even reaching, is impossible."<sup>59</sup>

Shaykhul Islam Abu Ishaq Shirazee Shaafi'ee in his book, Al Luma' fi Usool Al Fiqh, states, "And the crux of the matter in the science of *Jarb'* and *Ta'deel* is that the '*Adaalah* [Reliability] of the narrator is either famous and well known, or he is known as a *Faasiq* [open transgressor] or *Majbool*

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<sup>53</sup> Imaam Ibn Taymiyyah- said, "There is no doubt regarding Imam Abu Hanifah (R)'s knowledge. People later attributed many lies to Imam Abu Hanifah (R), which were all untrue. The aim of such writings was to taint Imam Abu Hanifah (R)." [Minhaaj Al Sunnah Al Nabawiyah, Vol./1, page. 259, By Hafidh Ibn Taymiyyah]

<sup>54</sup> In *Hadith* terminology this refers to the one who has narrated many *Abaadeeth*.

<sup>55</sup> Al Intiqaa' p.229

<sup>56</sup> Sahih Bukhaari and Sahih Muslim (Mishkaat p.145)

<sup>57</sup> *Ta'deel*- Means to authenticate, but in *Hadith* terminologies, it has a more detailed meaning, which will be explained shortly.

<sup>58</sup> Namely Sufyaan bin 'Uyaynah and Sufyan Al Thawri, both Master *Mubadditheen*.

<sup>59</sup> Jam'ul Jawaami' by *Allamah* Subki 3/441

[unknown person]<sup>60</sup>. If his ‘*Adaalah* [reliability] is known, such as the *Sabaabah* (R.A.), the senior *Taabi’een* such as Hasan Basri, ‘Ataa bin Abi Rabaah, Imaam Sha’bi, Ibraheem Nakh’ee, or the Illustrious Imaams such as Maalik, Sufyaan, Abu Hanifah, Shafi’ee, Ahmad, Ishaq, and those who tread their path, then it is *waajib* [necessary] to accept their narrations and it is not necessary to investigate their reliability.”<sup>61</sup>

Haafidh Ibn Salaah, in his own words, has narrated the very same thing in his widely acclaimed book of *Usoolul Hadith*, *Uloom Al Hadeeth*,

“The one whose reliability is well known amongst the people of knowledge and praise of his trustworthiness becomes renowned, then this suffices as a witness to his ‘*Adaalah*.”<sup>62</sup>

Haafidh Shams Al Deen Al Sakhaawi writes in his book, *Al Jawaahir Al Durr fi Tarjumatil Shaykhil Islam Ibn Hajar*,<sup>63</sup> “Ibn Hajar was asked whether Imaam Nasaa’i’s labeling Abu Hanifah (R) in his book, *Al Dhu’afaa wal Matrookeen*<sup>64</sup>, from amongst the ones who are not strong in *Hadith* and one who has many mistakes and errors due to him narrating few *Abadith*, was correct, and if anyone else from the *Imaams* of *Hadith* supported him. So he (Ibn Hajar) replied, ‘Imaam Nasaa’i is from amongst the *Imaams* of *Hadeeth* and whatever he said was that which was according to his own knowledge and *Ijtihad*, and not every opinion of every person is taken.’ Some from amongst the *Muhadditheen* had agreed with Imaam Nasaa’i. Imaam Khateeb Baghdaadi had gathered all the accepted and rejected, positive and negative criticisms, concerning Imaam Abu Hanifah in his famous and accepted history book.<sup>65</sup> Thereafter, concerning the issue of his few narrations, he responds by saying, ‘Imaam Abu Hanifah was very strict in accepting *Abaadith*, as he would accept only those *Abaadith* which were never forgotten after memorization. Because of this strict condition he has narrated less *Abaadith*. Otherwise, he had many narrations.

However, It is better not to indulge in these types of discussions, because Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) and those *Imaams* have already crossed the bridge (meaning they are free from our criticisms), therefore no one’s Jarh would affect the status of *Imaamah* and leadership that Allah Ta’ala has granted them. Therefore, rely on the research of these *Imaams*, and Allah is the owner of *Tawfeeq* (Ability).<sup>66</sup>

According to the clear statements of these ‘*Ulama* of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*, it is not necessary to check the *Jarb*’ and *Ta’deel* [narrator criticism] of the *Imaams* of *Jarb*’ and *Tad’eel* and their statements individually, yet, as a bulwark to the authenticity and integrity of the *Imaam*, some quotes and references will be cited below:

- 1- Muhammad bin Sa’d Al ‘Aufi says, “I heard Yahya bin Ma’een say, ‘Imaam Abu Hanifah was so *thiqab*<sup>67</sup>, he would not relate any *Hadith* except that which would be memorized, and the ones he hadn’t memorized, he wouldn’t relate.”<sup>68</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Both terms, *Faasiq* and *Majhool* are terminologies of *Hadith* literature which indicate towards the weakness or unreliability of a narrator. See *Tadreeb Al Raawi* for details.

<sup>61</sup> *Al Lum’ fi Usoolil Fiqh* by Shirraazi p.41

<sup>62</sup> *Uloomul Hadith* by Haafidh Ibn Salaah p.115

<sup>63</sup> Imaam Sakhaawi - (d.902h)The book is a biography of the great scholar of Hadith Haafidh Ibn Hajar.

<sup>64</sup> Imaam Nasaa’i - (d.303h) *Al Dhu’afaa wal Matrookeen* meaning “The Weak, Rejected Ones.”

<sup>65</sup> The book’s name: *Taareekh Baghdaad* meaning History of Baghdaad.

<sup>66</sup> Source- Taken from *Athar Al Hadith Al Sharif* by Shaykh ‘Awwaamah p.116-117

<sup>67</sup> Another term in the science of Hadith that means authentic.

<sup>68</sup> *Tahdhibul Kamaal* by Mizzi 7/340

- 2- Salaah bin Muhammad Al As'adi Al Haafidh says, "I heard Yahya bin Ma'een say, 'Imaam Abu Hanifah is reliable in *Hadith*'".<sup>69</sup>
- 3- 'Ali bin Madeeneh<sup>70</sup> says, "Sufyaan Thawri, Abdullah bin Mubaarak, Hamaad bin Zaid, Hushaim, Wakee' bin Jarraah', 'Abbaad bin Al-'Awwaam, and Ja'far bin 'Aun all narrate from Abu Hanifah, and he is reliable and there is nothing wrong with him."<sup>71</sup>
- 4- Muhammad bin Ismaa'eel says, "I heard Shabaabah bin Siwaar saying, 'Imaam Shu'bah bin Al 'Hajjaaj had a good opinion concerning Abu Hanifa.'"<sup>72</sup>
- 5- Abdullah bin Ah'mad bin Ibraaheem Al Dawraqi says, "I was listening when Yah'ya bin Ma'een was asked concerning Abu Hanifah, to which he said, 'He is *thiqab*[reliable], I have heard no one declare him unreliable.' This is the very same Shu'bah who wrote to Imaam Abu Hanifah to narrate *Abaadith*. And Shu'bah, is Shu'bah (The status that Imaam Shu'bah holds in the field of *Jarh*' and *Ta'deel* is known to all)."<sup>73</sup>

For brevity, we will suffice on the quotes of Imaam Yahya bin Ma'een, Imaam 'Ali bin Madeeneh, and Imaam Shu'bah bin Hajjaaj, otherwise we can go with the quote of Imaam Abdul Barr, who says, "Those who narrate from, praise, and declare Abu Hanifah as *Thiqab* (reliable), are far greater [in number] than those who criticize him."

The status these '*Ulama* hold in the field of *Jarh*' and *Ta'deel* is not hidden to any. The witness of one of these '*Ulama* is sufficient to establish the authenticity of a person.

### **Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) in the field of *Jarh*' and *Ta'deel*<sup>74</sup>**

Not only was Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) a '*Aadil*, *Dhaabit*<sup>75</sup>, *Haafidhul Hadeeth*, and a master in the field of *Asmaa Al Rijaaal*<sup>76</sup>, but along with his intelligence, insight, honesty and trustworthiness, he was included amongst the '*Ulama* who were authorities in *Jarh*' and *Ta'deel*.

Imaam Haafidh Abu 'Abdillah Shamsuddin Al Dhahabi (d.748h) (of whom Imaam Ibn Hajr says, "He holds a mastery in the field of criticism of narrators.") mentions in his famous book,

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> One of the foremost teachers of Imaam Bukhari(R). Imaam Bukhari (R) once said: "I have never considered myself so small in front of anyone as I have considered myself in from of 'Ali bin Madeeneh." See [Makaanatil Imaam Abi Haneefa Fil Hadith](#) by Allamah 'Abdur Rasheed Nu'mani.

<sup>71</sup> [Jami' Bayaanil Ilm](#) 2/1083 by Ibn Abdi Barr

<sup>72</sup> [Al Intiqaa'](#) p.196

<sup>73</sup> [Jami' Bayaanil Ilm](#) 2/1084 by Ibn Abdi Barr

<sup>74</sup> *Jarh* and *Ta'deel*- This is a science that deals with narrator criticism and approval, meaning where one studies and evaluates the accreditation of *Abadith* and their narrators to determine if they fulfill the conditions which qualify the narration to be authenticated, and to find out the reasons behind any possible rejection of their narrations. The chain of narrators which fulfill the conditions of authenticity are acceptable; other chains which include one or more reason to justify their rejection means they are rejected. *Jarh* literally means to wound, and in the terminology of the *Muhadditheen* it means to criticize a narrator. *Ta'deel* literally means, to deem as just, and in the terminology of the *Muhadditheen*, it means to declare a narrator to be reliable. Criticism of *Hadith* narrators is a science of significant importance and its outcome is that we are able to rate each *Hadith* as either authentic or weak. The same thing applies to accreditation of the narrators. See [Tadreeb Al Raami](#) by 'Allama Suyooti (R) for details.

<sup>75</sup> Both the words '*Aadil* and *Dhaabit* are amongst the terminologies of *Hadith* which indicate towards the reliability of the person.

<sup>76</sup> The intricate study of the biography of each narrator in the chain of a *hadith*.

Tazkiratul Huffaadh,<sup>77</sup> “These are the names of those narrators of *Hadith* whose *ijtihaad* is accepted in declaring narrators to be *Thiqah* or *Dha’eef* and declaring *Abaadith* to be *Sahih*<sup>78</sup> or *Dha’eef*.”<sup>79</sup>

Imaam Dhahabi, in Tazkirah<sup>80</sup> has mentioned Imaam Abu Hanifah under the fifth category of the *Huffaadh* of *Hadith*, which makes it clear that according to Imaam Dhahabi, Imaam Abu Hanifah is amongst the Scholars of *Hadith* whose verdict is taken in regards to the science of *Jarh’* and *Ta’deel*.

Imaam Dhahabi, in his treatise, “*Dhikru Man Yu’tamadu Qawluhu Fil Jarh’ Wal Ta’deel* [“Mention Of Those Whose Verdicts Are Accepted In The Field Of *Jarh’* And *Ta’deel*”], mentions,

“The first people to do *Jarh’* and *Ta’deel* after the *Sabaabah* were Imaam Sha’bi and Imaam Ibn Seereen. Some of the *Jarh’* and *Ta’deel* of these two *Imaams* are still preserved. The reason for the small amount of *Dha’eef* people at that time was because it was the time of the *Sabaabah* who were all reliable and besides *Sabaabah* were senior *Taabi’een* who were generally reliable and protected their narrations (from discrepancy). Then a group of weak narrators arose in the beginning of the second century *Hijri* amongst the junior *Taabi’een*, and then amongst the last level of *Taabi’een*. Then, around 150 A.H., when most of the *Tabi’een* had passed away, a group arose who did *Jarh’* and *Ta’deel*.

Thus, [as an example of Imaam A’zam’s expertise in the field of *Jarh’* and *Ta’deel*] Imaam Abu Hanifah (R) said, ‘I have not seen a worse liar than Jaabir Al Ju’fi.’<sup>81</sup> Due to this criticism of Imaam Abu Hanifah (R), the scholars of *Hadith* generally reject Jaabir Al Ju’fi’s narrations. Therefore, Imaam Tirmidhi in his Kitaabul ‘Ilal criticizes Jaabir Al Ju’fi using the reference of Imaam Abu Hanifah (R), saying, “Mah’moud bin Ghaylaan narrated to me who narrated from Abu Yah’ya ‘Himmaani who said, ‘I heard Abu Hanifah say, ‘I have not seen a worse liar than Jaabir Al Ju’fi, and [I have not seen anyone] better than ‘Ataa bin Abi Rabaah.’”<sup>82</sup>

This citation, cited by Imaam Tirmidhi, has also been quoted by Imaam Ibn ‘Hibbaan, in his book, Sahih Ibn Hibban, Ibn ‘Adi, in his book, Al-Kaamil fil Dhu’afaa, and Haafidh Ibn ‘Abdil Barr in his Jaami’u Bayaanil ‘Ilm wa Fadhlil.

Imaam Baihaqi, in his book, Qira’at Khalfal Imaam, writes, “If only the criticism of Imaam Abu Hanifah was found concerning the unreliability of Jaabir Al Ju’fi, then this would suffice, as

<sup>77</sup> Tazkiratul Huffaz by Imaam Dhahabi 1/1

<sup>78</sup> *Sahih*- A *Hadith* whose narrators are *ثقة* (عدل) [did not commit any major sins nor do they do any undignified acts] and *ضابط* [they have preserved the *Hadith* well. Either by memory or writing it down] and the chain of narrators is *متصل* [unbroken] and it is not *شاذ* [contradict the narration of a more *ثقة* person or more *ثقات*] and it is not *معلل* [have any hidden defect]

\*It is not permissible to translate *صحيح* as authentic as this is a specific term amongst the terminologies of *Hadith* which is unique in its term definition.

<sup>79</sup> That *Hadith* which doesn’t fulfill all the conditions of *صحيح*.

The ruling of *ضعيف* is that according to the vast majority of *Mubadditheen*, one can practice on a *ضعيف* *Hadith* in *فضائل* (virtues) as long as it fulfills certain criteria which have been explained by Hafiz Ibn Hajar. See in the last chapter of Al-Qawlul Badee’ by Imaam Sakhaawi for further details.

\*It is not possible to translate *ضعيف* as weak as this is a specific term amongst the terminologies of *Hadith* which is unique in its term definition.

<sup>80</sup> Tazkiratul Huffadh 1/168

<sup>81</sup> Arba’een Rasaa’il fi uloomil Hadith p.172-175

<sup>82</sup> Jami’ Tirmidhi 2/333 (taken from Ibn Maajah aur Ilm-e-Hadith p.229, Tahdhibul Tahzib 2/48)



*Imaam* had seen him, experienced him [seen his practical life], and saw enough to discredit him, thereafter informed us.”<sup>83</sup>

Imaam Abu Muhammad ‘Ali bin Ah’mad, more well known as Ibn ‘Hazm writes in his famous book, Al Muhallaa Fi Sharhil Mujallaa, “Jaabir Al Ju’fi was a liar, and the first to attest to this was Abu Hanifah.”<sup>84</sup>

It becomes quite apparent from these quotations that in the field of *Jarb’* and *Ta’deel*, just as the verdicts Imaam Bukhaari, ‘Ali bin Madeeni (teacher of Imaam Bukhaari), Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Yah’ya bin Ma’een, Yah’ya bin Sa’eed Qattaan, Abdur Rahman bin Mahdi, Imaam Shu’ba and other Imaams of *Jarb’* and *Ta’deel* are accepted, similarly, the verdicts of Imaam Abu Hanifah are also accepted as proof. One will find that the *Jarb’* and *Ta’deel* of Imaam Abu Hanifah is taken as proof in books like Tahdheebul Kamaal of Imaam Mizzi, Tadheebul Tahdheeb of Imaam Dhahabi, Tahdheebul Tahdheeb of Haafidh Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalaani and others. We do not have the capacity in this brief article to enumerate them all. Insha Allah, on another occasion, we will expand on the information presented here.

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p.108, 109

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p.3,781